

From the Editors

This issue begins with two challenges to the legal academy relating to the digital age. The first, offered by Diana Donahoe, offers what may at this time be the minority position in legal education. She calls on law professors to embrace laptop computers and the Internet to better engage students in the classroom. She explains how she developed teaching materials designed especially for this generation of students. The investment in this case was substantial, and the technologies are changing. Readers will see that it is not necessarily easy to bring our teaching methods into the digital age, but the pay-off does indeed appear to be substantial on all sides. Our second article, by Steven Bradford and Mark Hautzinger, similarly embraces the laptop but in this case aims to cut down on escalating book expenses—in particular those associated with the “statutory supplement.” The authors walk readers through the process of creating on-line statutory supplements to replace the \$30–\$50 offerings that students now buy for each course. They argue their approach can virtually eliminate costs and that text searching capacities make the digital option preferable to the statutory books. Again, there is also a wealth of detail on just how even the novice can use available software to make a suitable supplement that the students will, in fact, prefer.

Our next pair of articles continues our effort to make our readers aware of developments in legal education abroad. Juny Montoya examines the general path of reform in Latin America, showing the power of globalization and U.S. influences and the resilience of long-established domestic patterns. She carefully sets out the seeming paradox of abundant evidence of experimentation and reform coupled with enduring practices long beset with problems. As we know well from own experiences, it is tough to transform legal education in any society. Long established patterns of behavior, reflected in career incentives and hierarchies of values, are very hard to reshape in Latin America and elsewhere. The next article, by Luis Fernando Pérez Hurtado, provides a fascinating picture of legal education in Mexico, our NAFTA partner to the south. Lawyers are being produced in abundance within a system of almost bewildering complexity. Yet, the increased production of lawyers does not necessarily mean the “rule of law” is developing apace.

We then offer a series of observations on the state of the legal profession and legal education in the current period of crisis in the United States. We start with a provocative article written by a law student, Daniel Thies, who brings together a number of criticisms and issues his own call to change. As the student representative to the ABA’s Section on Legal Education, he offers suggestions to revise accreditation standards to make law schools more cost-effective and law graduates better equipped for the practice of law. The

next two articles are responses by experienced commentators to the recipes for change offered by the relative newcomer. Both find much to agree with but also suggest some skepticism about both the diagnosis and the remedy. Judith Welch Wegner, one of the authors of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Education's study, *Educating Lawyers*, makes the case for a more dramatic change than proposed in the Thies article. She wants to separate components of the bar exam, such that first year students can be tested on the first year subjects as soon as they finish those initial courses. As one of the most imaginative and thoughtful commentators in legal education, her argument needs to be taken very seriously. Scott Westfahl, similarly, brings a fresh perspective grounded in unique experience. As a former McKinsey consultant and now director of professional development for a large law firm, he draws a picture of what it takes to transform the relationship between corporate law firms—which from time immemorial have seemingly hired on the basis of school attended and grades—and law schools which want to make the case that their graduates—or at least some of them—are better trained and skilled to begin a corporate law practice.

Next, what we call humor in this issue is really a series of six-word windows into the confusion, fear, loss, irony, and other sentiments found in the first month of law school. The six-word stories were assembled by Mary Dunnewold from beginning law students. All the articles in this issue, we think, offer unique insights into important dimensions of legal education and the legal profession—technology issues, globalization with respect to our Latin American neighbors, and the impact of the current economic crisis on the profession. But we think our readers will also appreciate the range of emotions and sharp wit evidenced by these six-word stories.

Finally, we offer two book reviews. Christopher Tomlins reviews Bruce Kimball's book on Langdell and the origins of modern legal education, drawing on the book to show that Langdell was a far more complex figure than the caricatures by which he is too often depicted. And Kenneth Williams reviews John Temple's book on one lawyer's effort to defend a North Carolina man convicted of murder and sentenced to death. He compares his own experiences defending death row inmates to the experiences depicted in the book. The two books and the reviews are very different from each other; but a readership immersed in legal education and seeking to instill professional virtues in law graduates will learn from both. As always, we welcome comments and suggestions. We hope that you enjoy this issue.

Bryant G. Garth
Gowri Ramachandran
Molly Selvin